[The Cyberpunk Book Club]

TCBC[001] **By Ronin Vektor** **Free**

<Rant>

Star Death and New Age Grifters

A star collapsed under its own weight at the core of my soul. In the crushing gravity of the black hole it left behind, a singularity formed. A mass of infinitely dense sorrow, rage, and disgust. It strained against the physics of my body, yearning to erupt in an unending scream of despair.

That’s what it feels like to wake up to the simulation. To gaze into its horrible code. To understand it wasn’t programmed by some sinister artificial intelligence, but by humanity. To know we don’t exist in a simulation — the simulation exists in us.

So fuck every New Age grifter trying to swindle you for likes, subs, ad revenues, and your own goddamn money. Scum who frame their mildly inconvenient day as a “dark night of the soul.”

They give you a whole sob story before claiming they “manifested” some great fucking life. Then they sacrifice you right back to the simulation. Their book (probably written by AI, self-published, and available on Amazon for $9.99) will tell you how to “vibrate” at

just the right frequency of consciousness.

I got news for you:

Their manifestation technique is getting people to buy into their bullshit. And they do it by preying on that feeling somewhere inside us that something is missing.

The Cyberpunk Book Club isn't where you should come to read about manifesting the life of your dreams. It won't tell you to only think positive thoughts. I'm not Peter Pan and you're not one of the fucking Darling children.

But, if you want to understand the simulation… To join me in trying to hack it… Then **TCBC** is exactly what you should be reading.

If you're lucky, a star will collapse at the core of your own soul. And, if you survive it, you'll finally have the goddamn fire burning in you to scream: ENOUGH!

We don't exist in a simulation. The simulation exists in us.

<Simulation>

There Is No Spoon

What the hell do I mean the simulation exists in us?

I mean it's how we experience the world. Everything you've ever seen, touched, tasted, smelled, or heard — *all of it* — has been a simulation.

At least, that's the short answer. Now put a pillow between your head and the wall. The explanation is about to rail your mind like it just got out of prison.

In ode to *The Matrix*, go grab a spoon. Take a long, hard look at it.

You *think* you're seeing the spoon in front of you. You here, spoon there. But that's not what's happening at all.

For the sake of your sanity, let's assume the spoon is real. What actually happens is: light hits the spoon. Some of that light gets absorbed, some reflected. Your eyes catch a portion of the reflected light — but even *that* isn't what you see.

Your retinas convert the light into electrical signals. Little data packets your optic nerves transmit to your visual cortex. And there, in the pulsing biological computer between your ears, that data gets turned into a kind of live stream. That's what you "see."

Hope you lubed up your gray matter, because *this* is where things get fucked.

The spoon you're "seeing" isn't out there in front of you — it's inside your brain. A simulation. A replica created by your consciousness. And it's the same with every other sense. You've never seen, felt, tasted, smelled, or heard reality itself. Only the version your brain renders for you.

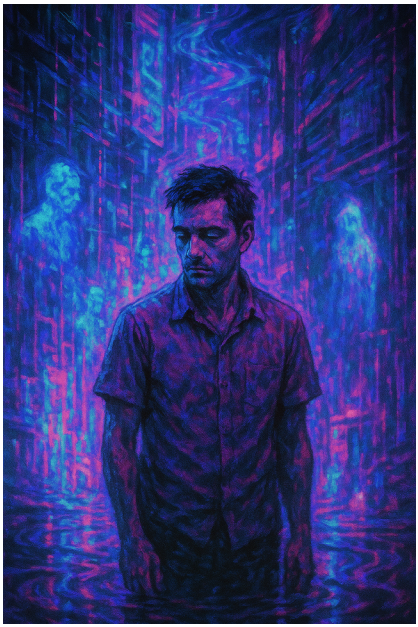
No one has ever known anything outside their

own subjective experience. And your subjective experiences? Simulations. It's as if each of us lives inside our own copy of the universe, experiencing it in our own way.

That's what I mean when I say the simulation exists in us.

But this is just the first step toward understanding it.

Just because the simulation lives inside of us doesn't mean it doesn't *bleed outward* into the world.



<Consciousness>

The Dreamer Is The Dream

I'm a strange guy with strange interests and stranger thoughts who sometimes does strange things. At least by the standards of what most people consider *normal*. That often leads to strange experiences. Which, honestly, is one of the things I like most about myself.

One of those interests is consciousness — especially the metaphysical aspects of awareness, experience, and thought. And one of the things I enjoy is running little experiments on myself. Usually involving lucid

dreaming and near-dream states.

Recently, I wondered what would happen if I told someone in a dream they were a piece of my consciousness.

Would they get defensive? Maybe even angry? But then I started to wonder: could I learn from them instead? Could I figure out what dreaming of them meant?

So the plan became this: induce a lucid dream, find someone in it, and ask them a question. *If you were a piece of my subconscious mind, what would be your message to me in a dream?*

Lying in bed, I rehearsed the question. Over and over. Trying to prime my brain to remember it — and remember to ask it — as I focused on staying aware while falling asleep.

This technique often brings me into a hypnogogic state: not quite asleep, not fully awake. If I can maintain awareness and avoid sleep paralysis, I can usually nudge myself into a lucid dream.

But something happened while I repeated that question in my mind.

There was a shift.

I wasn't just asking the question — I was being asked. At the same time.

For a moment, I was both the dreamer and the dream. Conscious and subconscious. Meeting each other as equals.

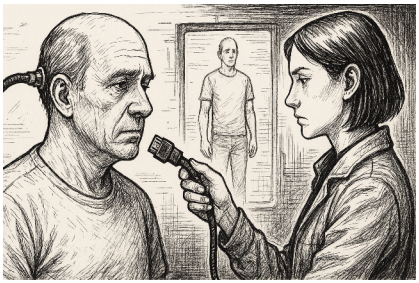
Then — snap — I was back. Fully awake. Brain buzzing.

I tried again. Slid back into a weaker hypnogogic state. And from somewhere out there — or maybe deep within — an answer drifted in.

"If I knew I were dying,"
it said,
"I would try to do it slowly,
and experience everything I could."

Which one of us asked? Which one answered? I couldn't tell you.

But it sounds like good advice.



<Fiction>

The NPC Program

They rendered my digital body from 3D scans. Captured my movements with a haptic suit. Used something similar to map my facial expressions. Cloned my voice.

I gape at the character — my eternal resting place.

All that's left is the transfer.

As per my agreement with Biophage.

If you have the money, they can make you look however you want. Give you a whole digital afterlife. A home. Outfits and skins. Anything you can imagine. Some people even pay for their own little worlds on private servers.

I never had much money. You know how it is — rent, bills, food, kids. Living costs more than most people can afford.

So, in a way, it was a blessing when they diagnosed me with heart failure. Stage three. Treatments I could never afford. The doctor at the free clinic gave me a number for Biophage's Non-Player Character Program. I scheduled a personality screening.

They only take you if players will like you. Guess I had something they wanted, because they offered me a deal.

Sure, I'll just be an NPC. I'll look like a healthier version of me — not some jacked superhero. And I'll sort of sleep until something in a game wakes me up. No house of my own. No dreamscape retreat.

I know. It doesn't sound like much.

But what else can poor folk hope for?

The tech approaches. A black cognitive interface cable in her hand.

"Are you ready, Mr. Vektor?"

I think of the royalty checks Biophage will send to my kids. Not much, but not nothing.

I nod, and feel the tech jack the cable into my cerebral port.

And all goes black.

<Final Thought>

No Escape

How is it possible to escape the simulation if it exists within us? If it's how we experience the world?

Put simply, there is no escaping it.

Think of it this way: Mario exists in Mushroom Kingdom. A digital world existing within our own. But for him, Mushroom Kingdom is his base reality. He is part of Mushroom Kingdom's code, not separate from it.

The same is true for us. As part of the simulation's code, we are the simulation.

What separates us from Mario is that we're capable of understanding this. How the code works. And of shaping it.

WE ARE THE SIMULATION.

README

The Cyberpunk Book Club [001]
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What the fuck did I just read?

TCBC in an independent zine of rants, reviews, philosophy, fiction and other bits of mental anarchy.

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Ronin Vektor was turned down by the Biophage Corporation's Non-Player Character Program. This in no way affected his representation of them in this issue. But they can fuck all the way off. Please consider supporting his work at:

patreon.com/RoninVektor

[TCBC]